



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS



## CHINA, THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

By HELEN SCOTT HAY, R.N.

Late Superintendent of the Illinois Training School for Nurses

ONE of the gratifying signs to nurses and nurse educators is the enormously increasing demand for the trained nurse in various fields of usefulness; in private duty and in hospital and training school, so long the limit of her activities, and now in the broader fields of preventive medicine and social betterment, where the opportunities are often more numerous than the women competent to meet them.

From the foreign mission field, as well, there has come an urgent call for the trained nurse, and feeble has been the response thus far. For the mission field means small pay, exile from home and friends, conditions untried and unknown; and lacking any deep spiritual conviction to lead her, the nurse prefers and accepts the easier, familiar tasks at home. From China there have come frequent importunate requests for women competent to undertake the management of school and hospital, and for many years there have been, in a few isolated communities of that great Empire, some members of our profession, working with all the zeal and fine enthusiasm of the pioneer, and leaving behind them blessed memories of their work and influence. In the annals of the trained nurse let these devoted women be given the deep appreciation and reverence that is due them.

Now China's call is becoming more and more insistent, and because we have seen something of her needs and her opportunities we are led to write this article; inspired also by the admiration and affection for her people that our wanderings in this land have given us; a people pathetically poor, cheerful, and patient, and resourceful to an astonishing degree, with an eagerness to learn, a quickness to comprehend, and a power to apply, that under good leadership will some day make them a great nation. My arguments are not based on any profound understandings of China and the Chinese; they are merely the opinions of a passerby, sometimes with the approval of the long-time resident, sometimes in spite of it; and not because we understand the Chinese less, but because we understand the nurse and her capabilities more.

In considering this problem in China, a question of first importance, it seemed to us, was: "How much do the medical workers and missionaries really desire the nurse? Will she be welcomed by all of her colaborers, and be sure of work, responsibilities, and a definite place that shall insure her interest and devotion?" And the responses are many times not reassuring, physician or other Christian worker either opposing the innovation of the trained nurse or manifesting grave doubt as to her serviceableness. "The nurse is not adaptable enough for these unusual conditions." "She is too imperative." "She can't get on with the physicians." "She soon becomes unhappy and dissatisfied." "The Chinese will not accept her services," and so on. But this spirit of doubt need occasion no surprise. Is it not always with the appreciation of the few, and in spite of the indifference and skepticism of the many that the best work is developed, in nursing as in other lines of activity? And seeing somewhat of the enormous difficulties with which these Christian workers in foreign lands have to cope, one does not wonder they fear any innovation which may disturb the peace secured only with years of labor and trial. If only they could realize—for their own sakes and for the sake of the work where she is so much needed—the comfort and fresh strength and increased efficiency which the nurse would bring to them! In some centres of hospital work, whence come the most urgent calls for help, there is to be found a disheartening indefiniteness as to the place and the duties the women will be given when they at length are found, and one reason for the nurse's short service and discontent is made plain. But this lack also need not surprise us. No more should these unfavorable comments and conditions discourage in any wise the good woman who feels any call to this work. They are facts that it is only fair to mention in passing, but they touch upon relatively small hindrances that will soon be overcome with efficient and enthusiastic service.

A second pertinent question is: Does China need the trained nurse? To one seeing China even briefly or in small part this would seem a foolish question where arguments in the affirmative are at hand enough to fill a book. First, and most immediately important, she is needed in the fields already more or less developed, *i.e.*, in training school and hospital, that the work in these may be properly organized and standardized, and that the young women of China may have adequate opportunities for thorough training in all branches of nursing service which their country will shortly be asking of them.

But is there not need and opportunity other than these? The arguments in favor seem quite incontestable. China is, numerically,

one of the great nations of the world, the population numbering approximately 400,000,000. The 18 provinces combine an area of 1,500,000 square miles, with a varying density of population greatest in the province of Shantung, where it is almost 700 persons to the square mile. Eleven cities have each a population of from 500,000 to 1,000,000. It is a country of great natural resources, and therefore of vast potentialities, but in fact it is poor, desperately poor, where necessity trains the people to a thrift and resourcefulness that is beyond the comprehension of a wasteful, prosperous people like ourselves of the United States. True the saying is that China would be rich in a year on what we wantonly waste. Flood and famine and the attendant scourges of disease are spectres always at the people's elbows. At best, life is a mean and pitifully poor existence for the masses of the people, where hard daily struggle gives neither time nor inclination for aught else. In the face of such conditions, and with none to teach better ways, it is but a natural result that filth and squalor and the most deplorable of living conditions are everywhere the rule. The helpless and sick poor exist miserably only by begging, and for the one who dies by the way, there are left thousands of these bundles of rags and misery to haunt one at every turn. Chinese houses admit little light or fresh air, and correct sanitation, or hygienic measures of any sort, have never been heard of. In all China there is but one hospital for the insane. Almshouses, hospital service for the indigent sick, homes for the aged, and schools for the blind and defectives, except as these have been founded and supported by the missions, are pitifully few and wholly inadequate.

*(To be continued)*